

(BARE) HANDS OFF!

ELIMINATING BARE HAND CONTACT WITH READY-TO-EAT (RTE) FOODS

Effective January 1, 2014, section 113961 of the California Retail Food Code prohibits bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods at all retail food facilities.

Recent studies indicate that hand washing alone is not enough to prevent foodborne illnesses. Avoiding bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods provides an added protection against contamination.

WHAT IS READY-TO-EAT (RTE) FOOD?

A ready-to-eat (RTE) food does not require any additional heat treatment step to make it safe before consumption. Below are examples of RTE foods and procedures involved:

- Bread – *slicing bread or making sandwiches*
- Tortillas – *rolling burritos*
- Deli meats and cheeses – *making sandwiches*
- Fruits – *garnishing drinks*
- Vegetables – *making salads*
- Sushi – *rolling sushi or making nigiri*
- Garnishes like lemon wedges, chips and pickles

HOW TO AVOID BARE HAND CONTACT

Food handlers can use tools to prevent bare hand contact, such as:

- Forks
- Spoons
- Tongs
- Scoops
- Spatulas
- Wax paper
- Toothpicks
- Bakery and Deli wraps
- Single-use disposable gloves
- Dispensing equipment

Touching ready-to-eat foods with bare hands is **NOT ALLOWED**.



If you choose to use them...
USE GLOVES PROPERLY

Gloves are NOT a substitute for washing your hands.

Wash hands before putting gloves on and whenever gloves are changed.

Gloves are for a single task.

Use each pair of gloves for *one* task* and discard them when damaged or soiled, when interruptions occur during a task, or when the task is completed. Rinsing gloves for re-use is not allowed.

*Examples of a task include handling raw meat, handling ready-to-eat foods, or cleaning. Ask your inspector for details.

